

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DACCA 02413 200344Z  
ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10  
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11  
/064 W

-----092831 210058Z /64

R 190914Z APR 78  
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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8931  
INFO AMCONSUL CALCUTTA  
AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD  
AMEMBASSY COLOMBO  
AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU  
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI  
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L DACCA 2413

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PGOV, PINT, BG  
SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ORDINANCE PROMULGATED; PLANS FOR  
INTERIM COUNCIL OF MINISTERS REPORTEDLY SHELVED

REF: A) DACCA 1780 (NOTAL); B) DACCA 2340

1. USING MARTIAL LAW AUTHORITY, THE BDG ANNOUNCED  
APRIL 18 AN ORDINANCE FOR HOLDING PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS.

CALLED THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION ORDINANCE 1978, THE DOCUMENT  
AUTHORIZES THE ELECTION COMMISSION TO ANNOUNCE THE DATE  
FOR PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS (BASED ON UNIVERSAL ADULT  
SUFFERAGE) AND TO APPROVE THE NOMINATION APPLICATION  
OF CANDIDATES. TO QUALIFY AS A CANDIDATE, A PERSON MUST BE  
AT LEAST 35 YEARS OLD AND NOT BE DISQUALIFIED FOR  
ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT OR HAVE BEEN REMOVED FROM THE OFFICE  
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OF PRESIDENT UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE 1972 CONSTITUTION.  
ADDITIONALLY, A CANDIDATE WILL BE REJECTED BY THE ELECTION  
COMMISSION IF HE IS DISQUALIFIED "FOR THE TIME BEING"  
UNDER THE IMPROPER ACQUISITION OF PROPERTY REGULATION  
(DECLARATION OF ASSETS), THE FILING DEADLINE OF WHICH IS  
MAY 9 (REF A).

2. COMMENT: THE RULES OF CANDIDATURE FOR ELECTION TO PARLIAMENT AND HENCE PRESIDENT UNDER THE 1972 CONSTITUTION WOULD DISQUALIFY FORMER PRESIDENT KHANDAKAR MUSHTAQUE AHMED, AS HE HAS BEEN CONVICTED OF A CRIMINAL OFFENSE INVOLVING MORAL TURPITUDE, I.E., CORRUPTION. OTHER CANDIDATES, PRINCIPALLY AWAMI LEAGUERS, MIGHT BE REJECTED AFTER FILING THEIR ASSETS MAY 9; THE PHRASE "FOR THE TIME BEING" SUGGESTS THAT A CANDIDATE MIGHT BE DISQUALIFIED IF THERE IS EVEN A SUGGESTION OF IMPROPRIETY IN THE DOCUMENTS. END COMMENT.

3. MANY POLITICAL OBSERVERS IN DACCA EXPECT THAT A PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION WILL BE HELD MAY 30 AND THAT PRESIDENT ZIA WILL SHORTLY MAKE AN OFFICIAL ANNOUNCEMENT ALLOWING OPEN POLITICS. IT IS ALSO EXPECTED THAT A POLITICAL FRONT WILL BE OFFICIALLY ANNOUNCED SOON, BUT PROVISION FOR AN INTERIM GOVERNMENT WITH ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN AND OTHER POLITICIANS HAS REPORTEDLY BEEN SHELVED. (REF B). ACCORDING TO MASHIUR RAHMAN, PRESIDENT OF NAP/B AND ONE OF THE POLITICIANS MOST DIRECTLY INVOLVED IN THE DISCUSSIONS WITH ZIA, ATAUR RAHMAN KHAN WITHDREW WHEN IT APPEARED HE WOULD NOT BE GIVEN SUFFICIENT AUTHORITY AS A CHIEF MINISTER.  
SCHNEIDER

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** MARTIAL LAW, REGULATIONS, PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS, ELECTION CANDIDATES  
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**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
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**Review Markings:**  
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